



Board of Forestry Meeting

October 03, 2019
Appomattox, VA

Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Burke at the Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center in Appomattox, Virginia. Chairman Burke read the Anti-trust policy to remind the Board of the legal requirements.

Roll Call:

Board of Forestry Members Present

Anne Beals, Don Bright, John Burke III, Joel Cathey, Mike Hinchey, Beth Flippo Hutchins, Ken Morgan Jr., Franklin Myers, Heather Richards, Ben Reeves, Greg Scheerer, Dr. David Smith and Glen Worrell

Members Absent

None

Adoption of Agenda:

Motion was made to approve the agenda as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP) Present

Rob Farrell, State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Deputy State Forester; Harvey Darden, Director of Agency Lands; John Colligan, Chief of Administration; Michelle Stoll, Director of Public Information; Chris Cox, Utilization and Marketing Program Manager; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Brad Copenhaver, Deputy Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Ron Jenkins, Virginia Loggers Association; Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau; Susan Seward, Virginia Forest Products Association

Hearing of Citizens:

None

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the May 13, 2019 minutes as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry (SAF) Update:

Deputy Secretary Copenhaver discussed the following:

- ◆ Secretary Ring sends her regrets for not being able to attend.
- ◆ Thank you to Martha Moore for coordinating the Governor's visit to the State Fair.
- ◆ Thank you to Rob Farrell and his great leadership for accomplishing the Highlands Easement in southwest Virginia, the largest easement for the state.
- ◆ Teal-Jones purchased two Virginia Lumber Mills
 - Investing \$21 million in Henry County creating 67 new jobs and \$11 million in Westmoreland County creating 59 new jobs.
 - They will be sourcing 100 percent of their lumber from Virginia.
- ◆ Don Bright attended the Vietnam Wood Show in Vietnam.
 - Vietnam is going to continue to grow as export destination for Virginia products.
 - There is a lot of Virginia product, both pine and hardwood, in Vietnam.
 - VDACS has done a great job of promoting Virginia wood to Vietnam.
- ◆ Thank you to John Burke for his involvement in the Watershed Implementation Planning Phase III (WIP III).
 - The final WIP III plan was released five weeks ago and forestry will play a large role.
- ◆ Currently having budget discussions and the Governor will release his budget in mid-December.
 - It will take a lot of resources for VDOF to meet their goals, working hard to get them in the budget.
- ◆ Healthy Watersheds Forest Project's two pilot counties (Essex and Orange) are moving full steam ahead.
- ◆ Governor attended Smokey Bear's 75th Birthday Celebration in August at the VDOF James W. Garner Building.

Director of the Virginia Loggers Association (VLA) Ron Jenkins arrived – discussed a few initiatives that the VLA are involved in.

- ◆ With the help of the Virginia Farm Bureau we have successfully created two resolutions – one in Bedford County and one in Pittsylvania County – to consider forestry harvest equipment as agricultural equipment. These resolutions are in the early stages for the General Assembly.
- ◆ At Federal level trying to get the Safe Routes Bill passed.
 - Have the legal maximum state hauling weights on interstate highways to match the legal maximum state hauling weights on non-interstate highways.

State Forester's Report:

Rob Farrell reviewed with the Board agency updates:

- ◆ The Governor will be at the VDOF booth at the State Fair on Friday, October 4.
- ◆ The Governor will celebrate with VDOF the newest State Forest, First Mountain State Forest in Rockingham County, along with the 100th anniversary of State Forests on Monday, October 7.
- ◆ New employee orientation tour will be October 8-10.
- ◆ Senior Area Foresters (SAF) will be meeting October 9 and Glen Worrell will be speaking about the expectations of the Board of Forestry.
- ◆ Reception for Virginia Forever, a group of industry and large organizations that have an interest in conservation funding, will be held on October 9.
 - Virginia Forever has put their focus on finding much-needed agency resources.

- ◆ Virginia is hosting the national meeting for Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in Richmond. Farrell will be speaking about VDOF's partnership with Virginia Tech for a research project about BMPs.
- ◆ Was in Ashville, North Carolina for the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) meeting. Their focus was shared stewardship.
 - Lots of discussion amongst the Southern Group State Foresters (SGSF) about the fire weather.
- ◆ Budget proposals have been submitted.
 - Trying to get more resources to do what we do.
 - Dropped the FOIA bill legislation from last year.
- ◆ Recognize the Public Information Office for the great job they did on the 2020 VDOF calendars celebrating the 100th anniversary of the State Foresters.
 - Supply of calendars for everyone, please take some.
- ◆ Teal-Jones decided to come to Virginia, success builds on success.
- ◆ Completed the Nature Conservancy Highlands Easement.
 - The biggest conservation easement in the history of Virginia and the most complicated.
- ◆ The Conservation Fund acquisitioned the Stanley Lumber property, approximately 8,000 acres.
 - The plan is to make 5,000 acres the next Virginia State Forest.
- ◆ Rob attended the Virginia Loggers Association meeting and the Virginia Forest Products Association meeting.
- ◆ Celebrated Smoke Bear's 75th Birthday.
- ◆ Shenandoah County Fair had the Smokey Bear Hot Air Balloon.
- ◆ Introduced Chris Cox (utilization and marketing project developer); he will be doing the industry roundtables.
- ◆ Fire ant quarantine has been expanded.
 - Currently entire counties of: James City, York, Cities of: Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg.
 - Expanded entire counties of: Brunswick, Isle of Wright, Greensville, Mecklenburg, Southampton, Cities of: Emporia, Franklin
 - Would like to have VDACS talk to companies in those areas.
 - Anything going south doesn't apply.
- ◆ FEMA is proposing flood plain regulation changes. Concerns on the effects these changes will have on planting trees in riparian buffers. VDOF is very involved in the meetings.
- ◆ Terry Lasher is serving on a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) panel about the regulation permitting for solar facilities.
- ◆ Have heard the concerns about seedling survival this year. Looking into the issue, and once we do follow-up survival checks in the winter and have the data, will inform Board of findings.
 - Might need to consider changing the planting density with the changing weather.
 - Look at the possibility of an unknown fungus or possible deficiency in the soil.

Don Bright discussed with the Board new assessments the Forest Steward Council (FSC) has put on controlled wood.

- ◆ Really quick turnaround (Oct 5) for moving controlled wood.
- ◆ Bottomland Hardwood has been added to the specific risk areas.
- ◆ West of 81 has been deemed critical risk area, mesophytic cove sites.
- ◆ Mike Hincer will have his Chief Forester look into FSC.

Glen Worrell mentioned that next year Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and Tree Farm will be in their standard review process.

Greg Sheerer mentioned that the Hardwood Sawmill market is hurting, lot of closings and downsizing.

Ken Morgan mentioned that pine prices are very low and will probably have to cut back production.

Dr. David Smith talked about getting information about the changing weather patterns and nitrogen. Also mentioned concerned about fire for this fall. Be alert with changes coming up.

Informational Items:

Implementation of Timber Theft Law Update

Rob Farrell explained to the Board how VDOF was implementing the Timber Theft Law changes:

- ◆ Designated one person in each of our three regions to handle investigations.
 - Western Region – Brad Carico
 - Central Region – Derek Keiser
 - Eastern Region – Nelson Hillyer
- ◆ Instructions to VDOF is that every complaint goes to one of the designated individuals to do what they can to follow up.
- ◆ The mills should only hear from one of the three individuals in regards to Timber Theft.

Discussion of the Board Priority Topics

Rob Farrell reviewed with the Board the priority topics to be discussed at upcoming meetings.

- ◆ #1-Hardwood Management Initiative – Discussing that today.
- ◆ #2-Forest Economic Viability – Invite someone to talk about the world of forest economics that we all have to work within.
- ◆ #3-Evaluate RT and Seed Tree Law – Discuss at our spring meeting and hopefully have information to discuss seedling density at that time also.
- ◆ #4-Conversion of Forestland for Solar Facilities – Possibly have discussion in conjunction with the VaULT or VFA Summit in April.
- ◆ #5-Public Education, Including Elected Officials –

Planning for Subsequent Board Meetings.

- ◆ Discussing #1-Hardwood Management Initiative in today's meeting.
- ◆ Hoped for November or December to discuss #2-Forest Economic Viability. Don't believe we can line up a speaker in the time frame.
- ◆ #3-Evaluate RT and Seed Tree Law will be discussed at our spring meeting in March.
- ◆ Discuss #4 Conversion of Forestland for Solar Facilities at either the VaULT or VFA meeting in April.
- ◆ Board discussed having a meeting November or December. Thursday January 9th will be the next Board meeting in conjunction with the Agribusiness meeting. January 10 will be back up date if needed.
- ◆ Discussion on competitive salary for VDOF employees.

Appointment of Nomination Committee

- ◆ Chairman Burke will confer with State Forester Rob Farrell on two members to appoint to the nomination committee and then get in touch with them.

- ◆ Members appointed will choose nominations and give names to Mary Weaver by February 15.

Action Items:

- ◆ None

Committee/Liaison Reports:

Hardwood Management Task Force

- ◆ Chairman Burke reported that a Hardwood Forest Initiative update was included in your packet for review. After this meeting we will be touring the Appomattox State Forest and listening to Jerre Creighton (research program manager) on Hardwood Management.
- ◆ Rob Farrell met with the southern research stations folks while in Ashville, North Carolina and talked about demonstration forests. Planning on creating more demonstration forests in the southeast.
- ◆ Paying for a group to create a tool to help foresters look at a hardwood stand and gather the critical information to make decisions.
- ◆ Trying to take a holistic look at how we make recommendations and then how we can make those recommendations better over time.
- ◆ Looking at spending the Mountain Valley Pipeline money for forest enhancement in that 25 county area.

Reforestation of Timberlands Committee

- ◆ Greg Scheerer reported that the Reforestation of Timberlands Committee has not met since the last Board meeting but would like to meet soon to discuss the seedling survival rate.
 - Have Jerri Creighton or Harvey Darden attend the next reforestation of timberlands committee.

Don Bright requested a gap analysis report of hardwood versus pine and how can you even the playing field as one of the topics discussed at the economic development meeting.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

None

Schedule of Next Meeting:

- ◆ January 9 in Richmond.

Adjournment:

Chairman Burke called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made to adjourn the October 3, 2019 meeting at 11:57 a.m. and seconded. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Handouts attached: Virginia Imported Fire Ant Quarantine
Proposed Board of Forestry Priorities and Next Steps
Hardwood Forest Initiative